
Glow Medispa - Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) with ALA

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Complimentary Consultation

"What is Photodynamic therapy? "

The main uses for photodynamic therapy are: (1) active severe acne, and (2) actinic keratosis (precancerous skin lesions). Photodynamic therapy is a non-invasive treatment that involves a topical solution called Levulan Kerastick also known as Aminolevulinic acid or ALA. ALA naturally occurs in the body so this topical solution is absorbed in the skin. The skin becomes extremely photo-sensitive. The ALA incubates for about 1 hour. After the incubation is complete a light source is applied on the skin (IPL or Intense pulse light is the light source used at glow Medi Spa). This will activate the ALA. This treatment is successful for treating even severe acne and results may be comparable to accutane (a prescription oral medication which has many significant side-effects). It is also effective in treating actinic keratosis, for lesions that are visible as well as lesions that are not yet visible.

"How does it work?"

The intense pulse light activates the ALA and releases singlet oxygen which then deconstructs the cell membrane being targeted. Active cells such as cells involved in acne and actinic keratosis are the target. It leaves minimal damage to the normal surrounding cells.

"What is the recovery time?"

There is some redness and sensitivity for about 3 days. Then you will experience some flaking for about 3 to 4 days. If you have sun damage the spot will be temporarily darker for about 3 to 7 days.

"How many treatments will I need?"

It depends on your skin condition. When treating acne we recommend about 5 to 6 treatments. When treating sun damage we recommend about 3 to 4 treatments.

"How often do I need to do the treatments?"

The treatments are done about 3 to 4 weeks apart.

"Is the treatment covered by my health plan?"

Photodynamic therapy is considered a cosmetic treatment and may not be covered. However some insurance plans may cover the cost of the Levulan Kerasticks.

"Are the results permanent?"

The results have been known to last between 1 to 2 years. It is not a cure so it is recommended to do maintenance treatments.

"How often do I need to do a treatment to maintain my results?"

We recommend maintenance treatments about once a year to once every two years. The maintenance varies with each person due to lifestyle choices. If you are often exposed to the sun you may need to do a treatment more often.

"How does PDT feel?"

During the application of the ALA you may feel a tingling sensation. During the application of the intense pulse light you will feel something similar to a warm elastic band snapping on the skin. Most people find that it is tolerable.

"What about sun exposure?"

It is imperative that you stay away from sunlight and strong light exposure for about 36 hours. Your skin is extremely sensitive during this time. It will be sensitive to sun damage during the whole duration of you treatment. We highly recommend wearing a hat when you are outdoors as well as an SPF 30 or higher.

"How will I look after the treatment?"

You will be red and swollen for a up to 3 days. You sunspot will be darker for 3 to 7 days.

"How long does the treatment take?"

Including the incubation period you will be in the clinic for about 1 1/2 hours to 2 hours. The IPL treatment that activates the ALA takes about 30 minutes.

"What are the results like?"

It may take away the appearance of sun damage for a more youthful appearance. As for acne, we know there is no cure but PDT/ALA may put it into "remission" for up to one to two years. There are no systemic or internal side effects.

"How much does the procedure cost?"

The cost will depend on how many treatments you will need and the area being treated. We are pleased to see you for a complimentary consultation. Call our office at (416) 920-9998.